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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# WEEKLY SUMMARY

*Special Report*

*Carlos Marighella's Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*

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**CARLOS MARIGHELLA'S MINIMANUAL OF THE URBAN GUERRILLA**

The recent success of Latin American urban terrorists in such activities as the kidnaping and ransoming of foreign diplomats, as well as their proven ability to create at least limited disorder, apparently has prompted the ever-pragmatic Fidel Castro to accept and give some endorsement to urban terrorism as a revolutionary strategy. *Tricontinental*, a magazine published by the Cuba-based Asia, Africa, Latin America Peoples Solidarity Organization (AALAPSO), is currently circulating a handbook for the revolutionist called the *Minimannual of the Urban Guerrilla*. It was written last June by Brazilian terrorist Carlos Marighella, who was killed by police in November. (In 1967 *Tricontinental* published letters and pictures received from Che Guevara when he was in Bolivia). The manual is clearly designed to foster terrorist activities in Latin America's growing urban areas. It is too early to tell whether the handbook will be regarded as important as or with the esteem accorded the writings on rural guerrilla activities by Che Guevara and Regis Debray, but its publishers claim that "it will become one of the principal books of every man who, as a consequence of the inevitable battle against the bourgeoisie and imperialism, takes the road of armed rebellion."

**BACKGROUND**

Handbooks on revolution in Latin America have been published before. Che Guevara published several articles on rural guerrilla struggles in the early 1960s, and his *Guerra de las Guerrillas* was once considered the basic book on guerrilla warfare in Latin America. Regis Debray, who is still languishing in a Bolivian jail for taking part in Guevara's ill-fated Bolivian adventure in 1967, later became the primary spokesman for the rural guerrillas with his *Revolution Within the Revolution*, published by the Cubans in May 1967, and two earlier papers.

Guevara's death in October 1967, however, forced the Cubans to reappraise the efficacy of a rural-based guerrilla struggle. Moreover, domestic considerations, including the national objective of producing a ten-million-ton sugar harvest in 1970, compelled the Cubans to reduce their hemisphere-wide revolutionary activities.

This re-evaluation probably led to the conclusion that the typical Latin American peasant, because of his conservative nature, is not a solid base on which to develop revolutionary awareness and antigovernment activity without considerable ideological preparation at least at the present time. Growing urban populations, especially their student and labor sectors, and many young priests, however, are already seedbeds of unrest and antigovernment activity. It is only natural, therefore, that the revolution should be advanced in the urban areas until the rural peasants are sufficiently indoctrinated to administer the final coup de grace to the "establishment." The Cubans can argue, therefore, that their original emphasis on rural guerrilla activity is correct but may need original impetus from the urban areas. This point was made by Marighella.

In addition to this logical extension of revolutionary theory, urban-based guerrilla activity is not wholly at odds with the Castro-Guevara-Debray approach. Debray stated that the "cities

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are the graveyards for revolutionaries; city party backers tend to abandon guerrilla warfare when it suits their purpose; it is a mistake for guerrilla movements to become overly dependent on urban support and leadership." On the other hand, the mobility and small size of the extra-party military organization of the urban terrorist groups were considered useful by Debray. Moreover, he maintained that by sharing common experiences in the guerrilla struggle, the urban recruits would gradually be integrated into the rural environment and would gain an appreciation of peasant problems while the peasants themselves were improving their ideological understanding of revolution.

### CARLOS MARIGHELLA

The author of the *Minimannual* Carlos Marighella, is really an excellent authority for a possible new aspect of Cuban revolutionary strategy. In the first place, the circumstances of his death (he was ambushed by Sao Paulo police) have made him something of a revolutionary martyr. Perhaps some of the charisma surrounding Marighella resulted from accounts of his capture by Brazilian police in 1964. For instance, Luis Carrera in January 1969 wrote, "Five agents of the secret police opened fire on a robust man, age 56, who was hit twice in the lungs. Blood comes out of his mouth, but he manages to scream, 'You are going to kill a manly Communist.'" The fact that Marighella is already dead and cannot fall victim to some unglamorous end is an asset. He was always viewed by Castro as one of the most important revolutionary leaders in Latin America and,



Marighella

despite his demise, his organization is still considered promising by the Cubans. Formerly a top leader of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), Marighella submitted his resignation in 1966 to form his own more militant group, which achieved notoriety through terrorism, robberies, bombings, airliner hijackings, and the kidnaping of US Ambassador C. Burke Elbrick last September.

Marighella was dedicated to the idea of violent revolution. He may have been recruited by the Cubans from 1962 to 1964 when they had diplomatic representation in Brazil. He was responsible at that time for contacts between the Brazilian Communist Party and the Cuban Embassy. On leaving the party he indicated his distress at the conservatism and lack of revolutionary dedication of the regular party—a theme repeatedly stressed by Fidel Castro. Marighella said, "I am ready to take part in the revolutionary struggle with the masses but never to play a waiting game in bureaucratic politics pending its consideration....There is a lack of revolutionary impulse, a revolutionary conscience which is generated by struggle."

Marighella repeated his position in Havana in August 1967 at the Latin American Solidarity Organization (LASO) conference. He stated that the Brazilian revolution would be against "the common enemy—American imperialism," and that the way to unify revolutionary movements is through armed struggle.

In February 1968 he issued a document outlining the objectives and modus operandi of a new revolutionary organization dedicated to "action now" through the recruitment and training of guerrilla fighters and the eventual formation of a people's liberation army. LASO's political line was adopted; a complete break with the PCB was announced; and a loosely structured organization was advocated.

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In August 1968, Marighella published another document in Cuba on tactics and strategy of guerrilla warfare, which he dedicated to Che Guevara. Basic to this strategy is the "existence of a small nucleus of combatants." The ideological struggle must be made known to the people in a vastly bold, confident, and widespread manner, with a view to ensuring the political and revolutionary support of the masses. Moreover, the guerrilla forces "must have proper training, which begins with the careful selection of men, who should come in particular from the workers' and peasants' sectors." Eventually the elements of this stage, it was contended, would lead to a revolutionary army of peasants and workers, joined by students and intellectuals.

In December 1968, Marighella produced his "Message to the Brazilians," which was published in *Granma*, the official organ of the central committee of the Cuban Communist Party on 1 February 1969. In it he spelled out the tasks of his "revolutionary" government. It was in fact a call to arms, advocating the elimination of all North American interests. It called for a prolonged war to be launched in the blood of students, in the action of the clergy, and in workers' strikes. Moreover, it urged guerrillas to capture police and military personnel to be exchanged for political prisoners.

Subsequent information indicates that Marighella was planning attacks against Americans as early as 1968 in order to make the Brazilian population aware that there were persons willing to fight against US imperialism and to provoke the US Government into intervention in Brazil (a continuation of Guevara's "many Vietnams" theory). Kidnapping of important persons, both Brazilians and Americans, was advocated in 1968 with the objective of demoralizing the government and securing the release of important prisoners.

In September 1969, Marighella was interviewed by a correspondent from Paris *Front*. In answer to a question on the continental aspects of his revolutionary strategy Marighella replied, "We must respond to the global plans of North American imperialism with a global plan for Latin America. We have ties with the Latin American Solidarity Organization, as do many other revolutionary organizations on the continent, particularly those in neighboring countries that are struggling in the same direction as we are. And of course, it is our duty toward Cuba to free it from the imperialism encirclement, or to lighten the burden on it by fighting everywhere else. The Cuban revolution is the vanguard of the Latin American revolution, and that vanguard must survive."

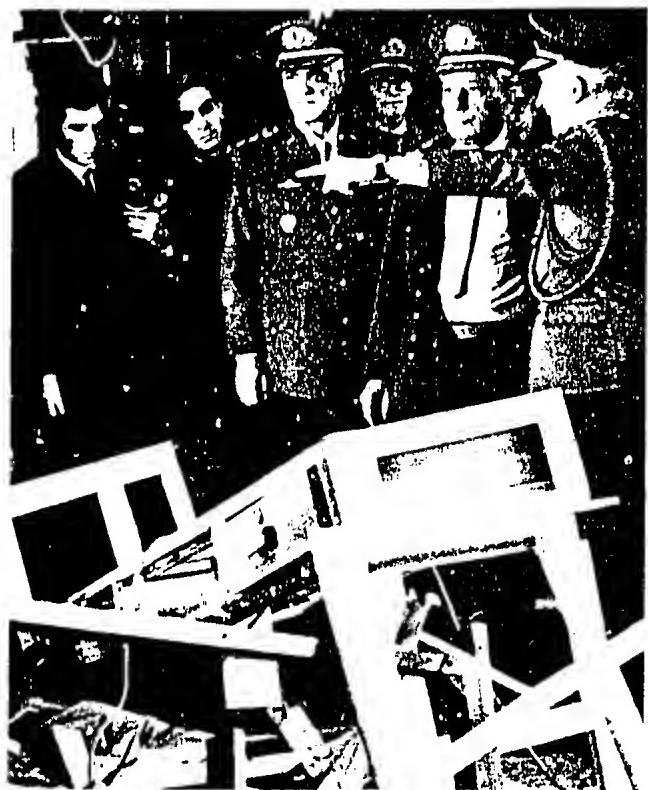
#### THE MINIMANUAL

Marighella's latest document, the *Minimanual for the Urban Guerrilla*, was written in June 1969, five months before his death. The direct link between Marighella's thoughts and the Guevara-Castro-Debray thesis is provided in the introduction, which is taken from the resolutions of the LASO conference: "The duty of every revolutionary is to make revolution." Furthermore, he reiterates his pronouncement that the function of urban guerrilla warfare is to "demoralize and distract the enemy forces, permitting the emergence and survival of rural guerrilla warfare, which is destined to play the decisive role in the revolutionary war." He adds that presently the men and women chosen for urban guerrilla warfare are "workers, peasants that the city has attracted as a market for manpower and who return to the countryside indoctrinated and politically and technically prepared, students, intellectuals, and priests. This is the material with which we are building—starting with urban guerrilla warfare—the armed alliance of workers and peasants, with students, intellectuals, and priests."

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Brazilian Generals Examining Terrorist Damage

The article defines the urban guerrilla as a man who fights the military dictatorship with arms, using unconventional methods. "He is a political revolutionary and an ardent patriot, a fighter for his country's liberation, and a friend of the people and freedom." The urban guerrilla is opposed to and attacks the "government, the big capitalists, and the foreign imperialists, particularly North Americans." Thus, the urban guerrilla in order to exist must aim at the "physical liquidation of the chiefs and assistants of the armed forces and the police" and expropriate government resources and those belonging to capitalists.

The *Minimanual* provides detailed guidance for sniping, ambushes, hijacking of aircraft, executions, riots, sabotage, assassinations, strikes,

and work interruptions as well as the occupation of factories and schools, and cites a variety of preferred targets including banks, local businesses, and US-owned companies. Terrorism, Marighella says, "is an action the urban guerrilla must execute with the greatest cold-bloodedness, calmness, and decision."

#### **EXECUTION AND KIDNAPING**

Of particular interest, especially at the present time, is Marighella's discussion of execution and kidnaping as weapons of the urban terrorist. As examples of execution, the manual cited the killing of a North American spy (the assassination of a US Army captain in Brazil); of an agent of the dictatorship (opposition political figures in Guatemala); of a police torturer (the murder of the chief of the Montevideo police quick reaction unit on 13 April 1970 by the Uruguayan Tupamaros); of a fascist personality involved in crimes and persecutions against patriots; and of a stool pigeon, informer, police agent or police provocateur. In many cases, according to the article, these executions should be carried out by a solitary sniper operating in absolute secrecy.

Kidnapping is described as "capturing and holding in a secret place a police agent, a North American spy, a political personality, or a notorious and dangerous enemy of the revolutionary movement." According to the *Minimanual*, kidnaping is used to force the exchange or the liberation of imprisoned revolutionary comrades, or to force the suspension of torture in the jail cells of the military dictatorship. The kidnapings of US Ambassador Elbrick and the Japanese consul general in Sao Paulo were used for these purposes. The communiqué issued by the terrorists following the Japanese consul's abduction, for example, stated that the act was committed "to obtain the freedom and ensure the physical integrity of some political detainees who are in the prisons of Sao

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Paulo....We would not have taken this attitude if there was no extreme necessity to save the lives of some comrades whose physical condition has become alarming."

The kidnaping of noted nonpolitical persons is also advocated inasmuch as the ensuing publicity can generate propaganda for the guerrilla cause. The kidnaping of North Americans resident in Brazil or visiting there is also considered useful since it publicizes the involvement of US imperialism in the country.

The kidnapings of political personalities thus far—the US ambassador to Brazil, the Japanese consul general in Brazil, the Paraguayan consul in Argentina, the US air attaché in the Dominican Republic, and the US Embassy labor attaché and the West German ambassador in Guatemala, have apparently been carried out by what Marighella described as a "firing group." This group consists of no more than four or five persons and constitutes the basic urban guerrilla organizational unit. It plans and executes urban guerrilla actions, obtains and guards arms, and studies and corrects its own tactics.

According to Marighella, "No firing group can remain inactive waiting for orders from above. Its obligation is to act." Moreover, any single urban guerrilla who wants to establish a "firing group" can do so. This organizational structure leads to free initiative and security. Two "firing groups," separated and sealed off from other firing groups, make up a "firing team."

Marighella concludes his article with a lengthy treatise on guerrilla security and the seven "deadly sins" of the urban guerrilla: inexperience, boastfulness, vanity, exaggeration of numbers, precipitate action, poor tactics, and poor planning.

By maintaining good security, by sustaining pressure on the police and armed forces, and by propagandizing governmental failures, Marighella says the urban guerrillas will not only preserve themselves but will also win the support of the people. As this support grows, the rural guerrilla war will develop rapidly and a solid infrastructure will be created. This group will be composed of peasants, who know the land; of students, who, although politically crude and coarse, have a special talent for revolutionary violence and have plenty of free time on their hands to spend on revolution; of intellectuals, who spread the revolutionary call and influence the people; of churchmen, who have the ability to communicate with the people; and of women, who have demonstrated unmatched fighting spirit and tenacity. In 1969, these processes were under way and there were reports that Marighella was preparing to undertake rural guerrilla activity in conjunction with the urban effort already in progress.



Fidel Castro in Animated Conversation with the Brazilian Revolutionaries at the Havana Airport

#### CONCLUSION

The *Minimannual* appears to represent a logical extension of the Guevara, Castro, and Debray revolutionary thesis. The already-widespread publicity of the various kidnapings and terrorist

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activities as well as the publication of the article in *Tricontinental* may result in its wide readership. It is conceivable, therefore, that the document may become a principal statement for any-

one who "takes the road of armed struggle." Marighella, at least, maintains that to be a "terrorist is a quality that ennobles any honorable man." [redacted]

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Special Report

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